

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Status

Claims 1-7 are pending in this application, of which claims 1 and 4 are independent in form. Claims 1-7 stand rejected. Claims 1 and 4 are amended. Claims 2, 3 and 5-7 are canceled without prejudice and disclaimer and new claims 8 and 9 are added. No new matter has been introduced.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) allegedly as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,378,610 to Ermer *et al.* (“Ermer”). Applicant respectfully disagrees with the characterization of the claims and prior art in the stated rejection and respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant has canceled claims 2, 3 and 5-7, thereby rendering their rejection moot.

The claimed present invention is believed different from Ermer in at least the following regards and Ermer does not teach or suggest at least such aspects of the present invention as required by independent method claim 1 and corresponding apparatus claim 4.

Applicant respectfully submits that Ermer teaches a cleaning device provided with a brush for cleaning a data carrier. The brush is composed of fibers or filaments which are electrically conductive. The brush comes into contact with the data carrier to sweep it, and voltage is applied to the brush to dissipate the electrostatic charge of the data carrier.

In contrast, in the present invention as recited in independent claims 1 and 4 for example, a conducting means composed of a plurality of conducting members each having the shape of a pin are used instead of the brush as disclosed in Ermer. The conducting members are maintained in a state where they are capable of advancing and retreating. Further, a movement means is provided to drive the conducting members. The conductive members are moved to a cleaning target to come into contact with the cleaning target, and voltage is applied to the conducting members while keeping the contact state, thereby eliminating static electrification on the cleaning target.

By the constitution described above, even if the cleaning target has a complicated shape, the conducting members can be surely come into contact with the cleaning target. Elimination of static electrification is effected while surely keeping the state where the conducting members and the cleaning target are in contact with each other, whereby it comes to be possible that elimination of the static electrification is surely effected at respective portions of the cleaning target, and further that the cleaning target is more effectively cleaned.

Thus, Ermer neither discloses or suggests at least this aspect of the claimed present invention nor the advantageous effect mentioned above.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention as recited in independent claims 1 and 4, and the claims depending therefrom, including new claims 8 and 9 added herein, is thus neither anticipated by nor rendered obvious in view of Ermer, taken alone or in combination with other art of record.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Dependent Claims

Applicant has traversed, but not independently addressed the rejections of the dependent claims. Applicant submits that, in view of the amendments to the claims presented herein and, for at least similar reasons as to why the independent claims from which the dependent claims depend are believed allowable as discussed supra, the dependent claims, including new claims 8 and 9 are also believed allowable. Applicant however, reserves the right to address any individual rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary or appropriate.

CONCLUSION

For the above-stated reasons, this application is respectfully asserted to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable examination on the merits is requested. In the event that a telephone conference would facilitate the examination of this application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided.

AUTHORIZATION

A Petition for a One month Extension of Time is filed concurrently herewith, extending the time for responding until April 22, 2006. While the petitioned extension of time is believed sufficient, should an additional extension of time be required to render this filing timely, such extension is hereby petitioned, and the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. **13-4500**, Order No. 1232-5100.

Respectfully submitted,
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